



## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

#### **Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Greater Atlantic Region Permit**

#### **Family of Forms**

**AGENCY:** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted on or before [Insert date 60 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER].

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at [PRAComments@doc.gov](mailto:PRAComments@doc.gov)).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Cynthia Ferrio, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Dr., Gloucester, MA 01930, (978) 281-9180, [Cynthia.ferrio@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.ferrio@noaa.gov).

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*I. Abstract*

This request is for extension of a current information collection.

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Secretary of Commerce has the responsibility for the conservation and management of marine fishery resources. Much of this responsibility has been delegated to NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Under this stewardship role, the Secretary was given certain regulatory authorities to ensure the most beneficial uses of these resources. One of the regulatory steps taken to carry out the conservation and management objectives is to collect information from users of the resources.

The Secretary has enacted rules to issue permits to individuals and organizations participating in federally controlled fisheries. Permits are necessary to: (1) Register fishermen, fishing vessels, fish dealers and processors; (2) list the characteristics of fishing vessels and/or dealer/processor operations; (3) exercise influence over compliance (e.g., withhold issuance pending collection of unpaid penalties); (4) maintain contact lists for the dissemination of important information to the industry; (5) register participants to be considered for limited entry; and (6) provide a universe for data collection samples. Identification of fishery participants, their gear types, vessels, and expected activity levels is an effective and necessary tool in the enforcement of fishery regulations.

This collection also includes the requirement for participants in certain fisheries to use onboard vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and to notify NMFS before fishing trips for the purpose of observer placement. Other permitting in this collection includes the written request to

participate in any of the various exemption programs offered in the Greater Atlantic region.

Exemption programs may allow a vessel to fish in an area that is limited to vessels of a particular size, using a certain gear type, or fishing for a particular species. This collection also contains paperwork required for vessel owners to transfer permits through a vessel replacement, request gillnet and lobster trap tags through the Greater Atlantic region permit office.

Lastly, vessel owners that own multiple vessels, but would like to request communication from NMFS be consolidated into one mailing (and not separate mailings for each vessel), may request the single letter vessel owner option to improve efficiency of their business practice.

## *II. Method of Collection*

### *Commercial Fishing and Dealer Permits*

All vessel permit applications, including permit applications and renewals for vessels, vessel replacements, dealers, and vessel operators, as well as gillnet and lobster trap tag purchase, are submitted by signed paper form sent in the mail.

### *VMS Requirements*

Vessels with VMS requirements are required to declare their intent to fish (e.g., declare into the fishery) and submit daily catch reports using electronic VMS units on board the vessel. Other VMS actions may include trip start and end hails, pre-landing notifications, and days-at-sea (DAS) adjustments. VMS power down exemption requests are submitted by signed paper form.

### *Observer Program Call-in Requirements*

Vessels issued certain permits such as Northeast multispecies, monkfish, scallop, and Atlantic herring permits are required to give advance notification to the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) before the start of a trip in order to receive a fisheries observer or a waiver. Vessels use an online pre-trip notification system, email, toll-free call-in number, or a local phone number to comply with this requirement.

#### *Exempted Fisheries Programs*

Vessels that would like to request participation in one or more of the Greater Atlantic region fisheries exemption programs must either submit a request electronically using their VMS unit, by declaring into an exempted fishery prior to the start of a trip, or by mailing in a written request to participate in the program(s) of interest.

#### *Vessel Owner Single Letter Option*

Vessel owners that own multiple vessels, but would like to receive only a single Greater Atlantic Fisheries Bulletin or small entity compliance guide instead of one for each vessel permit, must submit a written request to NMFS to participate in this program.

### *III. Data*

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0202.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Review:* Regular (extension of a current information collection).

*Affected Public:* Businesses and other for-profit organizations are primarily affected. Individuals or households, state, local or tribal governments, and the Federal Government are also affected.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 65,360.

*Estimated Time Per Response:* Varies

*Vessel Permits*

Vessel permit application: 45 minutes; vessel permit renewal forms: 30 minutes; initial dealer permit applications: 15 minutes; dealer permit renewal forms: 5 minutes; initial and renewal vessel operator permit applications: 1 hour; obtaining and submitting a dealer or vessel owner email address: 5 minutes; limited access vessel replacement applications: 1.5 hours; and applications for retention of limited access permit history: 1.5 hours.

*VMS Requirements*

Installing a VMS unit: 1 hour; confirming VMS connectivity: 5 minutes; VMS certification form: 5 minutes; VMS installation for Canadian herring transport vessels: 1 hour and 20 minutes; email to declare their entrance and departure from U.S. waters: 15 minutes; automatic polling of vessel position using the VMS unit: 0 minutes; area and DAS declarations: 5 minutes; declaration of days-out of the gillnet fishery for monkfish and NE multispecies vessels: 5 minutes; Good Samaritan DAS credit request: 30 minutes; entangled whale DAS credit request: 30 minutes; DAS credit for a canceled trip due to unforeseen circumstances, but have not yet begun fishing: 5 minutes to request via the VMS unit and 10 minutes to request via the paper form; VMS catch reports: 5 minutes; VMS power down exemption: 30 minutes.

*Observer Program Call-in Requirements*

Requests for observer coverage are estimated to require either 2 or 10 minutes per request, depending on the program for which observers are requested.

### *Exempted Fisheries Programs*

Letter of Authorization (LOA) to participate in any of the exemption programs: 5 minutes; Charter/Party Exemption Certificate for GOM Closed Areas: 5 minutes; limited access sea scallop vessels state waters DAS exemption program or state waters gear exemption program: 2 minutes; withdraw from either state waters exemption program prior to the end of the 7-day designated exemption period requirement: 2 minutes; request for change in permit category designation: 5 minutes; request for transit to another port by a vessel required to remain within the GOM cod trip limit: 2 minutes; gillnet category designation, including initial requests for gillnet tags: 10 minutes; requests for additional tags: 2 minutes; notification of lost tags and requests for replacement tag numbers: 2 minutes; attachment of gillnet tags: 1 minute; initial lobster area designations: 5 minutes; requests for additional tags: 2 minutes; and notification of lost tags: 3 minutes; requests for state quota transfers in the bluefish, summer flounder and scup fisheries: 1 hour; GOM cod trip limit exemption: 5 minutes; vessel owner single letter option: 5 minutes.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 20,825.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$2,536,248 in recordkeeping/ reporting costs.

#### *IV. Request for Comments*

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility,

and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

*Departmental Lead PRA Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.*

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

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